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ABSTRACT

Four Anglophone African newspapers were analyzed to determine whether their presentation of major foreign news was affected by the "New World Information Order" debate: the Western view that media should be free to challenge governments if necessary versus the Third World perspective that the press should be part of an integrated system of nation-building interests. The study analyzed any article that presented a news story from outside the country where the newspaper was printed. Analysis focused on the extent to which Third World news sources, geographic origins, and main topics were used for these items. The results did not demonstrate an interest in "alternative" news sources for Third World news. Neither was there evidence to support the position that Third World journalists demonstrate an interest in non-Western news. Finally, results indicated that similar definitions of "news" exist in the West and the Third World, and that, despite the rhetoric, Third World communicators viewed their press in ways similar to their Western colleagues. (HOD)

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FOREIGN NEWS IN AFRICA'S ANGLOPHONE PRESS: THE EFFECTS OF THE DEBATE FOR A NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER

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ABSTRACT

To determine whether changes in Third World print journalism have resulted from the "New World Information Order" debate, the news sources, geographic origins and main topics of major foreign news items in four Anglophone African newspapers were analyzed.

The data indicate that Third World print journalists do not demonstrate an interest in non-Western news agencies, in news from other Third World countries, or non-Western foreign news topics.

ABSTRACT # 2

During the 1970s, several Third World journalists accused the major Western news agencies of ideological and cultural "dominance" in gathering and reporting news of the world. UNESCO became the center of the debates between two philosophical positions: the Western view, that media should be free to challenge governments if necessary; and, the Third World perspective, that the press should be part of an integrated system of nation-building interests.

The research reported here examines the effects of this debate by analyzing the presentation of major foreign news items in four Anglophone African newspapers. The study analyzes the extent to which Third World news sources, geographic origins and main topics are used for these items.

The results do not demonstrate an interest in "alternative" news sources for Third World news. Neither is there evidence to support the position that Third World journalists demonstrate an interest in non-Western news. Finally, results indicate that similar definitions of "news" exist in the West and the Third World. These findings indicate that, despite the rhetoric, Third World communicators view their press in the same ways as their Western collegues.

FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS IN AFRICA'S ANGLOPHONE PRESS: THE EFFECTS OF THE DEBATE FOR A NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER

I. Introduction

During the 1970s, certain members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) made several attempts to address the issues raised by journalists and policy makers in the Third World. Their views centered on the Western influence in the flow of world news, the technologies of communications, and the dissemination of popular culture. The "New World Information Order" comprised these three general topics.

Regarding the first general issue, the flow of news throughout the world, the debate began as several communicators in the Third World, together with some Western voices, expressed dissatisfaction with the concept of "free flow of information." This new ideology argued for the mobilization of mass media in developing countries to support development objectives. In most cases, this meant that communications media systems were built on the foundations of the nationalized news agencies, and that these systems stressed the positive aspects of development in Third World nations. Many Third World leaders,

particularly those in newly formed nations, felt these "development" media systems were necessary because of the failures of Western journalists and news agencies to provide news adequately and accurately about the Third World.

This research primarily is designed as a descriptive study of the coverage of foreign news in four Anglophone African newspapers. The examination of these media is designed to address three research questions. They are:

* To what extent are "alternative" or local news sources used for foreign news items?
* How much Western dominance is evident from the geographic origins of foreign news items?
* Do the topics reflect a Third World definition of "news"?

II. Literature Review

Critics of the so-called Western "dominance" in news charge that although most of the world's news comes from United Press International, the Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Presse, these transnational agencies devote little attention to the Third World. In general, the argument centers on what one of its proponents calls "basic imbalances . . . in the political, legal and

technico-financial spheres [of world news flow] (Masmoudi, 1984:14)."

Hachten's (1981) characterization of the Western concept of the "free flow of information" correctly identified the tenets of the argument a number of Third World journalists have made. First, Hachten asserted that such "free flow" is available only to rich industrialized nations. The second assertion may be more serious, as it suggests that the industrialized world could use its increased dominance over world communication flow to promote a new form of cultural imperialism. The latter indictment is especially critical for the emerging new media technologies, including satellite communications and multi-point distribution systems. There are data to suggest that telecommunications are a crucially important factor in the process of modernization for the developing nations (see Pierce and Jequier, 1983, and Schiller, 1983).

These concerns, therefore, have prompted many in the Third World to reexamine their relationships with the systems of the international press. In response to these concerns, critics of Western journalism have proposed a "New World Information Order." These critics suggest that an objective evaluation of the status of news coverage of the Third World would demonstrate not only the

inappropiateness of the Western press for these regions, but also would emphasize the opportunities for information dissemination available to nationally- and regionally-based Third World news agencies. The critics maintain that cooperatives such as the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool, and nationalized media, such as the News Agency of Nigeria, would be able to control the flow of news into and out of these countries, as well as to "téll the truth" about the Third World: no longer would its press and its peoples be subjected to the Western perspective of themselves (see Golding, 1974).

Among the most widely recognized spokespersons for a redistribution of the world's information is Mustapha Masmoudi, a former Tunisian Secretary of State for Information. Masmoudi (1984) has leveled a number of charges against the Western news agencies regarding what he and others consider these agencies' control of the international flow of news. In criticizing what he perceives as the West's dominance of the supply of information, he cites evidence that "80 percent of the world's news flow emanates from the major transnational agencies, [which] devote only 20-30 percent of news coverage to the developing countries" (p. 14). He maintains that these figures demonstrate a "monopoly" by

the developed nations of not only the world's flow of information, but also over the technologies required in the Information Age. His observation of the "quantitative imbalance" of news volume and resources is further supported by other researchers (Lamb, 1982; Rosenblum, 1979; Righter, 1978).

However, Masmoudi goes further than merely describing these imbalances. The thrust of his argument is his advocacy for a "New World Information Order . . .to establish equality in the communications field between the developed and developing nations" (p. 20). He maintains that the Third World, the developed nations and international organizations each has specific mandates that would produce the requisite changes in the press relationships among peoples throughout the world. Chief among his suggestions for developing nations is their establishing national news agencies to democratize information resources and structures. That they devote more space in their press organs to the concerns of the Third World is chief among Masmoudi's suggestions for the developed nations. Finally, he suggests that international organizations encourage the development of "user friendly" communications technologies, so that all peoples may more fully participate in the information age.

There is only limited scholarly evidence that can be cited as support for the Masmoudii evaluation of the dominance of the international flow of news by the industrialized nations. For example, Ugboajah (1984) examined the current status of the sources and subjects in international news in the Nigerian media. He analyzed 205 international news items from three media for one week, and found that the Agence France Presse contributed the largest amount (11.7 percent). The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) contributed only 2.9 percent of the international news items analyzed. Nearly one-quarter of the items (23.4 percent) offered no identifiable source, "as Nigerian news media have a tendency not to identify their sources of international news" (p. 123).

Stevenson (1980) also has reported findings regarding the news agency coverage by the four Western news agencies of the Third World. Upon analysis of the geographic emphasis of wire service content, he found that "it is the second world of European socialism, not the Third World" (p. 15), which is invisible in Western wire service files to the Third World. He found that regionalism was the dominant characteristic of news media throughout the world: more attentiom was given to the West in the West; in the Third World, that region received more coverage. Stevenson

also found "no evidence either that [the Third World] is held up to an unusually favorable light, or . . . that [it] is singled out for any special negative coverage" (p. 15), as Masmoudi has charged.

Upon his analysis of the socio-political themes in the wire service files, Stevenson reported that only about one-quarter contained such terms as development, racism, terrorism, imperialism, and democracy. Interestingly, he reported that the use of such references was more extensive in the Third World media than in wire service copy. Finally, in terms of the sources of these items, he found that the amount of news credited to the Western agencies averaged less than 10 percent, while 15 to 20 percent of foreign news in several developing nations was credited to the country's own correspondents.

It would appear from these findings and observations that many of the charges against the Western press are unfounded. The research reported here examines the current status of foreign news coverage in print journalism in Anglophone African countries. After a decade of discussions about how dysfunctional the Western press is in its coverage of the Third World, it is important to determine whether the debate has produced any changes in the Third World press.

The Anglophone African newspapers from which the sample of four was drawn represent the spectrum of press in the Third World, in terms of ownership, control and readers served by the respective media. The newspapers analyzed were the Kenya Standard, the Nigerian Daily Times, the Times of Zambia and Tanzania's Daily News.

The Kenya Standard has a circulation of 33,000 and is "one of the freest presses in the Third World and Black Africa" (Wilcox, 1982). The newspaper was owned and controlled by the London and Rhodesia Mining and Land Company (Lonrho) until 1979, but remains "[journalism's] showcase on the continent for Western capitalism and free enterprise" (p. 861). There is no pre-publication censorship by the government, and no agency is charged with monitoring the press. The government encourages the Standard through government advertising, loans for new equipment and reduced postal rates.

Although the Daily Times is 60 percent government-owned, it is considered the "most influential" of the Nigerian newspapers" (Nwankwo and Kurian, 1982). With a circulation of 350,000, it is larger than all privately-controlled Nigerian dailies combined. Many Nigerians feel that "only the existence of government-owned papers guarantees that the national interest is protected

in a media world dominated by giant international corporations" (p. 692). Twenty-five percent of the Africa's population lives in Nigeria, which has the continent's highest per capita income [pci] at $670. The nation's literacy rate is 25 percent.

Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda nationalized the Times of Zambia and placed its control under the auspices of the United National Independent Party in 1980 (Fisher, 1982). In Zambia, the press exists to mobilize development goals for Zambia's nearly six million citizens, and this sentiment was evident in Kaunda's recent address to the International Press Institute:

> . . . [I]t is not our intention to take over completely the operation of the one commercial newspaper company. Africa requires complete independence from other members of the international community. The cause which we are following is not only for Arica, but for the but for the world as a whole, and the press has a positive role to play and it must play it if man is to survive (p. 1055).

As one of Tanzania's three dailies, the government-owned Daily News is considered "an integral tool in the process of national development" (Wilcox, 1982). The newspaper is designed to inform Tanzania's more than 17 million citizens about the nation's progress in development. Tanzania's literacy rate is 66 percent, and

the Daily News "exhorts them to support any number of government campaigns toward self-sufficiency" (ibid.). Half of its 28,000 readers includes the five percent of the population that lives in Dar es Salaam, its capital. Its readers are primarily the diplomatic community, British expatriates, tourists and government civil servants. In his "Socialist Paper for the People" editorial, President Julius Nyerere wrote that the paper "will strive to encourage and maintain a high standard of socialist discussions" (p. 864). According to Wilcox, the Times of Zambia has "more international news" than the other dailies, which are Uhuru, the official organ of the ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi party, or the Sunday Mzalendo.

III. Methodology

These data were collected through a content analysis of one week's major foreign news items in four Anglophone African newspapers. The newspapers were found among available issues in the foreign newspaper collections at the libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. For the Nigerian Daily Times, publications between December 1 and 8, 1982 were analyzed. Publications of the Kenyan Standard between April 1 and 8, 1983 were included in the present

research. Issues of the Times of Zambia published between August 23 and 30, 1982 were included. Finally, publications in the Tanzania Daily News between October 1 and October 7, 1982 were analyzed.

For the purposes of this research, a "major foreign news item" was a newspaper article that presented a news story from outside the borders of the country where the newspaper was printed. The determination was made from a dateline, if present, or from the content of the item itself. No sports stories, editorials or "news-in-brief" items were included.

The "news source" was the stated or implied source of the item. Categories included Western agencies, Third World agencies, multiple sources, and none cited.

The "geographic origin" of the item was stated by its dateline, or implied from the content of the article. Categories were the West, including countries in North America and Western Europe, Third World, including countries in Central and South America, Africa, and the Middle East, and World in General, including East European nations and stories which oould not be identified.

The "main topic" was determined from the content of the item. These were analyzed in terms of the ways they are defined as "news." These include the Western concept of

"hard news (politics, military and economics)," and all other topics (human interest, culture, and education, among others).

A final sample of 303 major foreign news items was analyzed.

IV. Results

The major foreign news items in seven issues of each newspaper were analyzed. These findings are presented in Table 1. The findings demonstrate that Anglophone African newspapers emphasize local issues, as does the press in the West. For the total sample, an average of fewer than 11 major foreign news items was presented per day. For each of the newspapers, this frequency ranged from fewer than eight per day (in the Nigerian Daily Times) to more than 13 per day (in the Tanzanian Daily News).

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Table 1 about here.

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Each of the newspapers analyzed is produced as a tabloid. Neither offered more than 10 pages of editorial copy for the time period included. For several issues, there were as many full-page advertisements as there were full pages of copy. Therefore, an average of fewer than 11

major foreign news items in the sample demonstrates an interest in local news.

Consistent with other research, most major foreign news items in the sample presented no source or the stories (59 percent). For the remainder, foreign news was found to be supplied by Western agencies slightly more often than by national agencies. These findings are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2 about here.

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Regarding news sources, it has been shown that none of the countries in Black Africa have a full-time foreign correspondent in Washington, DC (Ghorpade, 1983). Since neither of the countries in the study has a full-time foreign correspondent in this center of political news in the Western world, one may conclude that many of the foreign news items which presented no source reflect rewritten news stories from Western agencies.

Table 3 shows that most of the major foreign news items in the sample originate in the West (51 percent). For the Nigerian Daily Times and the Times of Zambia, however, the items tend to originate in the Third World. These results are not surprising, since both newspapers are controlled by

their respective governments, and are published to mobilize for development.

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Table 3 about here.

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This explanation does not hold for the Tanzanian Daily News, however. One would expect that its "development goals" would be better served by providing its readers more foreign news items about non-Western news topics. This is not the case, since the major foreign news items about Western topics and non-Western topics occur with similar frequency. One reason may lie in the large number of unattributed foreign news items found in the newspaper. If most of these came from Western agencies, it would follow that their geographic origins also would be in the West.

The last analysis presents the presence of main topics in the four Anglophone African newspapers. These results are presented in Table 4, and indicate that print journalists on these four newspapers may define "news" in much the same ways as do their collegues in the West. Although the results could have occured by chance, it seems that Western news topics are presented slightly more often than non-Western topics. Por neither of the newspapers does the occurance of Western and non-Western news topics

differ by more than four; in each case, Western topics occur slightly more often. For this analysis, then, it would appear that a finding of "no significant differences" is significant indeed.

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Table 4 about here.

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IV. Conclusions

Presented as an examination of the effects of the on-going debate between Western journalists and Third World communicators regarding the appropriateness of Western news coverage of the region, this study approached the issue from the perspective of the Third World journalist. In order to determine whether changes in the Third World press had resulted from the debate, the news sources, geographic origins and main topics of foreign news items in four Anglophone African newspapers were analyzed.

The findings appear to indicate that the calls for a "New World Information Order" largely have gone unheeded by communicators in the region for which it is proposed. The data suggest that the Anglophone African press does not demonstrate an interest in non-Western news agencies, foreign news from its neighboring countries, or foreign

news about non-Western topics.

These findings do not imply that other tenets of the "New World Information Order," including the advocacy for "user friendly" technologies, and locally originated popular culture, should not be pursued. However, it would appear that, for these Anglophone African newspapers, "news" is still defined in Western terms, and from a Western perspective.

TABLE 1:

PRESENCE OF MAJOR FOREIGN NEWS ITEMS IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS

	PRESENCE	
	Stories/Day	Standard deviation
NEWSPAPER		
Nigerian Daily Times	7.71	0.25
Kenyan Standard	12.29	0.35
Times of Zambia	10	0.16
Tanzanian Daily News	13.29	1.23

TABLE 2:

PRESENCE OF NEWS SOURCES IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS

	NEWSPAPER			
NEWS SOURCE	Daily Times	Standard	Times of Zambia	Daily News
Western Agencies	0	642	02	02
National Agencies	22	0	73	0
Multiple Agencies	0	5	17	0
None Cited	98	31	10	100
(N)	(54)	(86)	(70)	(93)

Chi square=409.43994 df=9 p=0.000

TABLE 3:

PRESENCE OF GEOGRAPHIC ORIGINS IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS

GEORAPHIC ORIGIN	NEWSPAPER			
	Daily Times	Standard	Times of Zambia	Daily News
West	42	57%	41%	63%
Third World	57%	38	54	33
World in General	7	5	4	4
(N)	(54)	(86)	(70)	(93)

Chi square=14.58609 df=6 , p=0.00237

TABLE 4:

PRESENCE OF MAIN TOPICS IN ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN NEWSPAPERS

	NEWSPAPER			
MAIN TOPIC	Daily Times	Standard	Times of Zambia	Daily News
Western topic	54%	51%	51%	51%
Non-Western topic	46%	49	49	49
(N)	(54)	(86)	(70)	(93)

Chi square=0.1435 df=3 n.s.

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